

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for~~ of failsoft headend operation in a complex, multiple location consumer communication and content delivery system, the system including a plurality of headend facilities, the system further including a central facility including a central database, and the system further including a distributed information technology (IT) architecture wherein a back office IT infrastructure is located at the central facility and wherein each headend facility includes a headend IT infrastructure, the method comprising:

providing a policy to a headend IT infrastructure facility, the policy defining policy limits for transactions that normally require ~~real time access to the central~~ approval from a database at a time a transaction is requested, wherein the policy includes failsoft rules governing limited transaction approval to be used by the facility in the event of a communication failure between the facility and the database at a time of a transaction request;

determining that a communication failure exists between the facility and the database at a time of a transaction request; and

using, by a facility computing device, the failsoft rules to preliminarily grant approval for the requested transaction in response to determining that a communication failure exists between the facility and the database at the time of the transaction request. handling real time transactions with the headend IT infrastructure, without real time access to the central database, in accordance with the policy limits.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
handling non-real time transactions at least partially with the back office IT infrastructure in response to resolution of the communication failure, transmitting an update from the facility to the database informing the database of the requested transaction.

3-4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~at least one of the headend facilities is for the facility is~~ a cable television system~~headend~~.

6-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for~~ of ~~failsoft headend operation in a complex, multiple location consumer communication and content delivery system, the system including a plurality of headend facilities, the system further including a central facility including a central database, and the system further including a distributed information technology (IT) architecture wherein a back office IT infrastructure is located at the central facility and wherein each headend facility includes a headend IT infrastructure, the method comprising:~~

receiving, at a facility computing device, a set of failsoft rules;

receiving a request for content at the facility;

attempting to communicate to an authorization computer a request for approval of the request for content;

determining that a communication failure has delayed or disrupted the process of obtaining approval of the request from the authorization computer; and

in response to the communication failure, approving or denying the request for content according to the facility's received set of failsoft rules.

~~for each headend facility, providing a policy to the associated headend IT infrastructure, the policy defining policy limits for transactions that normally require real time access to the central database; and~~

~~for each headend facility, in the event that access to the central database is unavailable, handling real time transactions with the associated headend IT infrastructure, without real time access to the central database, in accordance with the associated policy limits, thereby providing failsoft headend facility operation.~~

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8 further comprising:

in response to resolution of the communication failure, transmitting an update from the facility to the authorization computer informing the authorization computer of the requested

~~transaction for each headend facility, handling non-real-time transactions at least partially with the back office IT infrastructure.~~

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8 wherein ~~at least one of the headend facilities is for~~ the facility is a cable television system ~~headend~~.

12-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~15-18~~ wherein the at least one headend IT infrastructure is programmed to handle non-real-time transactions at least partially with the back office IT infrastructure.

17. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~15-18~~ wherein the at least one headend IT infrastructure is programmed to handle real-time transactions at least partially with the back office IT infrastructure, with real-time access to the central database, for real-time transactions that fall outside of the policy limits.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 15~~ A content delivery system, comprising:

a plurality of headend facilities;

a central facility including a central database;

a distributed information technology (IT) architecture wherein a back office IT infrastructure is located at the central facility and wherein each headend facility includes a headend IT infrastructure; and

wherein at least one headend IT infrastructure is provided with a policy defining policy limits for transactions that normally require real-time access to the central database, and is programmed to handle real-time transactions, without real-time access to the central database, in accordance with the policy limits, wherein the at least one headend IT infrastructure is programmed to determine an availability of access to the central database, and in the event that

access to the central database is unavailable, handle real-time transactions, without real-time access to the central database, in accordance with the policy limits, thereby providing failsoft headend facility operation.

19. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~15~~18 wherein at least one of the headend facilities is for a cable television system.

20. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~15~~18 wherein the central database is realized as a relational database.

21. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~15~~18 wherein the central database is realized as an LDAP/X.500 directory.

22. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the request for content is a request to view pay-per-view television content.

23. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the request for content is a request to add service to a user's subscription plan.

24. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the request to add service is a request to add one or more television channels to a television subscriber's subscription lineup.

25. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising determining that the communication failure exists based on communication delay.

26. (New) The method of claim 8, further comprising the facility receiving periodic updates to the set of failsoft rules from the authorization computer.